

FLIGHT JACKET

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Desert Talon prepares Marines for Iraq

Story by Sgt. Nathan K. LaForte

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION YUMA, Ariz. – Marines from aviation units throughout the United States checked in here Jan. 17 for exercise Desert Talon 1-04.

Desert Talon will prepare the air combat element of the Marine Air Ground Task Force going to Iraq, said Maj. James T. Jenkins, special projects officer, Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron 1.

More than 1,100 Marine students, 1,000 support personnel and 50 aircraft have come together to conduct an exercise that will teach these Marines to work cohesively as a unit.

This is the first exercise of its kind to take place at Yuma, said Jenkins. The exercise was put together in recent months by the direction of Col. Raymond C. Fox, commanding officer, MAWTS-1.

“Colonel Fox wanted us to create an exercise that would give us an opportunity to train the composite Marine Aircraft Group going to Operation Iraqi Freedom II,” Jenkins explained. “This is what we came up with.”

The staff of MAWTS-1 created a 13-day exercise that includes classroom training, practical application and a final exercise.

“There are lots of little things units do differently,” Jenkins said. “This exercise helps everyone know what to expect. You have to get the team together and practice before the big game.”

Desert Talon will train fixed and rotary-wing pilots and ground personnel to work together towards a common goal, Jenkins explained. He added that the students will cover reaction to possible threats, convoy support operations, casualty evacuations, desert landings, and a number of other useful skills.

Sergeant William C. Rapier, military policeman, Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, is a veteran of

Operation Enduring Freedom and said the training will be invaluable to the Marines.

“This will be a real eye-opener for Marines who haven’t deployed to a combat zone,” Rapier declared. “We’re just two days



A Marine watches the sunrise over the desert mountains while attending a crew served weapons class. The Marines at Exercise Desert Talon at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz. are preparing for another rotation of Operation Iraqi Freedom and more desert sunrises in the next few months. Photo by Sgt. Nathan K. LaForte

into the exercise and already this is a lot of training I wish we’d gotten prior to Afghanistan.”

The training shows Marines what they might encounter when they get to Iraq, said 1st Lt. Scott M. Clendaniel, forward arming and refueling point team commander, MWSS-374.

Outside a real combat situation “this is as real as it gets,” Clendaniel added.

To accomplish all of the necessary training, the Ma-

rine units will conduct some of their operations in the city of Yuma.

“The people here have always been helpful in supporting us and allowing us to do whatever we need to do,” he said. “Yuma is

amazing. They have allowed us to train before, but now they are letting us train in the town for four days.”

With all the moving parts and the added complexity of operating among the civilian populace, safety is the first priority of the exercise, said Col. Stuart L. Knoll, commanding officer, Marine Aircraft Group 16, during his opening remarks on the first day of the exercise.

“Nothing is that important that you have to risk yourself or your crew for a training mission,” Knoll said. “Remember, safety first.”

Jenkins mentioned that each unit has a lot to do before the deployment to Iraq, but that isn’t an excuse for shortcutting safety.

“Safety is a concern, especially since most units have Marines deploying as well as (participating in) the exercise,” Jenkins stated. “We are depending on the profes-

sionalism from each and every Marine to come together and do the right thing.”

“My commanding officer always says, ‘There is no such thing as a sound tactical plan that’s unsafe,’” he added.

The success of Desert Talon will be apparent only after the dust settles and the air is clear here, said Jenkins. Marines will demonstrate the true success of the training during OIF II.

“I hope they learn something,” he said. “If something we do assists them in accomplishing their mission, then we’ve done OK.”

According to Rapier, if the rest of the exercise goes as well as the first two days it will qualify as a success.

“We’re pushing the Marines hard, and they are doing well,” Rapier concluded. “By the time we’re done here, we’ll be ready to rock.”

Inside

Weekend forecast from Miramar’s weather station



70°/43°
Today



63°/45°
Saturday



64°/43°
Sunday

Service
members
go fishing



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FARP
support
in desert



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Miramar Mail

What is the Marine Corps policy on separation from the military for weight control?

**Lance Cpl. Victor Granda,
Calibrations Technician,
MWCS-38**

It is essential that every Marine maintain the established standards of health and physical fitness. With age, it is not uncommon for the average American to experience a decrease in physical activity and a change in metabolic rate with unchanged caloric intake. As a result, body fat and weight may increase, having a negative impact on one's health and level of fitness. Medical authorities state that excess body fat can be associated with high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular disease and similar health risks.

In extreme climates and physically demanding environments, excess weight and body fat can also impede physical performance and stamina, which is of particular importance to the Marine and the mission.

It is every Marine's responsibility to maintain the Marine Corps' body composition standards, or if not in adherence with standards, to take appropriate action to re-

turn to them in a timely manner. Marines on light or limited duty, whose medical condition precludes them from participating in specific activities, will be expected to participate in conditioning alternatives and dietary adjustments, in order to maintain these standards.

The Marine Corps' weight and body fat standards are not based on appearance. Marines are considered not within these standards when their body weight and body fat exceed the maximum limits. If tested and the Marine's percent body fat exceeds the maximum limit (18 percent for males, 26 percent for females), then the commanding officer will evaluate the Marine's physical performance (e.g., current semi-annual physical fitness test) using the physical performance evaluation criteria, then the CO will have the Marine evaluated by a medical officer and assigned to a body composition program - formerly known as the "weight control program." Marines assigned to the BCP will receive assistance in reducing body weight and in particular a more healthy physical fitness state.

In cases of rehabilitative failure, a Marine will be processed for administrative separation per paragraph 6206.1

of Marine Corps Order P1900.16F.

Rehabilitation failure is based on the following circumstances:

1. Failure to demonstrate significant and consistent progress towards meeting Marine Corps weight and body fat standards during the 6-month rehabilitation period.
2. Continued increase in weight and/or body fat during the rehabilitation observation period or aftercare period.



Maj. Gen. Jon A. Gallinetti

December Safety Message

General M.W. Hagee

Commandant of the Marine Corps

During December, six Marines died in off-duty mishaps and one Marine died in an on-duty mishap.

Off-duty

A lance corporal died when he lost control of his car on a highway in Arizona. The Marine was ejected from his car when it left the roadway and rolled. He was not wearing his seatbelt.

On Christmas Eve, a staff sergeant died as a result of injuries suffered in a motor vehicle accident caused by a drunk driver in another vehicle. His spouse is in critical condition with a poor prognosis for survival.

A corporal suffered severe injuries from a Christmas day motor vehicle accident while on I-95 in South Carolina. He died the following day.

The day after Christmas, a lance corporal was killed in a privately owned vehicle driven by a civilian who had been drinking and lost control of his vehicle. The lance corporal was not wearing a seatbelt. Another Marine passenger (corporal) suffered massive head/facial injuries, he is in critical condition.

In Hawaii, a corporal died when he was ejected from a vehicle that left the roadway and then rolled on top of him. The vehicle was driven by his civilian brother who had been drinking alcohol. This Marine was not wearing a seatbelt.

A lance corporal died while on liberty in Jacksonville, Fla. The Marine had been drinking alcohol at a party, fell asleep and

could not be awakened by his friends.

On-duty

One Marine died and another was injured when the driver lost control of a government vehicle while traveling on a highway in Texas. The vehicle rolled during the crash and ejected the sergeant from the vehicle. Both Marines were wearing seatbelts.

Observations / Trends

As we leave the holidays behind us, take a moment to reflect on the Marines lost in vehicle crashes. In concert with the second quarter safety theme: "Empowerment," realize we cannot win the campaign against preventable mishaps without action on everyone's part. We have the power to prevent many of the senseless losses described above. One major step is to use alcohol responsibly. Four of the six off duty deaths in December involved alcohol. Re-dedicate yourselves to reducing this risk and others in all your activities.

The second issue I want to address is the importance of seatbelt use. Three of the six fatal mishaps involved occupants who did not use seatbelts, and in two of the remaining three mishaps seatbelt use is unknown. There are real benefits for seatbelt use. National statistics indicate 73 percent of restrained occupants who were in a fatal crash last year survived; of those who were not restricted, only 43 percent survived. In crashes, 73 percent of all vehicle occupants who were ejected died; only 1 percent of restrained occupants were ejected. Be smart and safe, wear your seatbelt.

Semper Fidelis.



Tax Center open for business

Col. Paul C. Christian, chief of staff, Marine Corps Air Bases Western Area, cuts the ribbon that signaled the opening of the Miramar Tax Center Jan. 21. The center, located at the Miramar Library, building 5305, has trained personnel who provide tax filing services for Navy and Marine Corps military members, retirees and family members stationed here. The center helps with preparing and electronically filing federal and state income taxes at no cost. *Photo by Lance Cpl. John Sayas*

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Combat Correspondents

Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act replaced

Story by Cpl. Jeff Zaccaro

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

President George W. Bush recently approved the new Servicemembers' Civil Relief Act to replace the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act of 1940.

The new act provides protection to service members who are having difficulty meeting personal financial and legal obligations due to their military service and adds some benefits to the previous SSCRA.

With the SCRA in place, "Service members on long-term deployments or called to active duty should not have to worry about their families in their absence being evicted from their quarters without sufficient legal protections, or that they are paying on a leased car or apartment that they can't use, or about civil legal proceedings they can't attend because of their deployment," Air Force Lt. Col. Patrick Lindemann, deputy director for legal policy in the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, told the American Forces Press Service.

Not only are these services available for uniformed service members, but also Public Health Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration officers, National Guard members called to federal active service in excess of 30 days, and U.S. citizens serving in the prosecution of a war or military action with a U.S. ally are also protected.

One of the highlighted changes of the new act is a clause that puts a six percent cap on debt interest rates.

According to Judge Advocate Legal Advisory 1-04, a memorandum released by the Head Legal Assistance Branch, Judge Advocate Division, at Headquarters Marine Corps, creditors must reduce the interest rate on service members debts incurred before active duty to six percent per year during their period of service. All interest in excess of six percent is forgiven.

Another benefit that will help service members getting ready to deploy is the option to terminate a car lease when being deployed for an extended period.

According to the memorandum released Jan. 1, a motor vehicle lease for service members or their dependents

may be terminated if it is a pre-service lease and they are later called to duty or receive orders for a period of not less than 180 days, or if it is a lease executed during military service, and they later receive PCS orders outside the continental United States, or deployment orders, for a period of not less than 180 days. No early termination charge may be imposed, but certain fees and taxes may be charged pursuant to a service member lease, including reasonable charges for excess wear, use and mileage.

According to Lindemann, more service members need to know about the SCRA to protect themselves.

"Service members may not always realize all the protections they have under the law," he said. "If service members have questions about the SCRA or the protections that they may be entitled to, they should contact their unit judge advocate or installation legal assistance officer for further assistance."

For more information on the Servicemembers' Civil Relief Act, contact the Staff Judge Advocate office at 577-1656.

Financial assistance available for Marines seeking education

Story By Cpl. Kristen Tull

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

According to The Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average salary of an American with a bachelor's degree is around \$46,300. The average salary of someone without a bachelor's degree is around \$28,800. With hard work and dedication, most military members can attain a bachelor's degree in three years.

"In order to become a complete Marine, the Marine has to be effective in the Marine Corps and in society. This means they must be educated in both," said Gunnery Sgt. Ellsworth C. Huling, Miramar Education Office staff noncommissioned officer-in-charge.

Whether Marines do four years or 20 plus years, everyone eventually gets out of the Marine Corps. What happens in a Marines life afterward depends on the preparation the Marine makes now.

"When I started this job in 2002, I saw mostly junior Marines signing up for classes. Recently that's changed, and I'm seeing a better mixture," said Huling. "More senior Marines are realizing they are getting ready to get out and are starting to prepare."

Most Marines think they don't

have time to further their education, but that's not always the case anymore, according to Huling.

There are on-line, video courses, as well as classes offered at lunch here.

"Lunch time classes free up the Marines' time in the evening, affording them the opportunity to take even more classes," said Huling. "As long as they have a VCR or a computer, they can get an education."

Marines may feel as if their schedule wouldn't allow them the opportunity due to the needs of their work section. Talking to your supervisor about getting an education, and possible scheduling conflicts, can only help, said Huling.

"I believe it's important for Marines to be afforded the opportunity to get an education. I hope all staff NCOs and officers realize that one Marine missing for a class shouldn't shut a shop down," said Huling.

With all the training Marines receive, they get what's called a SMART transcript.

"If a Marine comes in, gets evaluated, he can get up to 30 credits for military service, which is half way to (an) associates (degree), leaving the Marine only two and a half to three years (after the

completion of an associates degree) to complete a bachelors degree," said Huling.

The best part ... it's free. A Marine can complete his or her degree without using their Montgomery GI bill. Tuition Assistance pays 100 percent, up to \$250 per semester unit, with a cap of \$4,500 per year. The Marines pay for books, but most of the time they can get reimbursed up to 50 per-

cent for selling them back to the company they purchased them from.

According to Warren C. Schmitt, director, Lifelong Learning Center, Marine Corps Community Services, Miramar alone spent \$2,084,142.87 on tuition assistance.

"1,972 individuals took courses at MCAS Miramar in fiscal year 2003," he said.

Miramar has around 9,000 personnel, that leaves more than 7,000 people missing out on millions of dollars worth of education, says Schmitt.

"All the Marines need to do is come in to our office and get educated on all of the opportunities out there," said Huling.

The education office is in building 5305. For more information please call 577-1801.

Post and Relief



Sgt. Maj. Lee



Sgt. Maj. Williams



Sgt. Maj. Adversalo

Sgt. Maj. J.P. Lee replaced Sgt. Maj. Keith L. Williams as sergeant major of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 323, Jan. 22. Williams assumed duties as the sergeant major of Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11, Jan. 12, from Sgt. Maj. Antonio R. Adversalo. Adversalo is currently posted as sergeant major of Weapons Field Training Battalion, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif.

Official Marine Corps Photos



SMP New Year's Party offers contests, food and prizes

Story and photos by
Cpl. Jeff Zaccaro

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Miramar's Single Marine Program held its first New Year's party at the Miramar Memorial Golf Course driving range Jan. 14.

Although the SMP traditionally holds an annual party around Thanksgiving, it was postponed because of the San Diego wildfires. Nevertheless, SMP came through with a great escape for the air station's service members and their guests.

Music was featured all night from on-site DJs from FM 103.7, The Planet, who played a variety of classic rock while the party's attendees participated in free events. In addition to the music, the SMP received donations of generous amounts of food and beverages from SODEXO.

According to SMP representatives, the most popular event of the evening was laser tag. During laser tag, service members earned points from their shots to be used toward competing in an SMP version of "Fear Factor."

There was also a rock-climbing wall provided by the Naval Station 32nd Street Morale, Welfare and Recreation department on

which service members could climb alone or race to the top with a friend.

Whatever the activity, Marines and Sailors were afforded the opportunity to escape their busy military schedules and have a little fun.

"This really gives you a chance to interact with others and it is a good break from work," said Lance Cpl. Anthony Mendoza, Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 361 SMP representative and Lombard, Ill., native. "This is a place where I can really be myself - where I can be Anthony, instead of Lance Corporal Mendoza."

Not only could service members be themselves at the SMP party, but they could also win free prizes.

One of the prizes handed out was a pair of skydiving tickets during a "closest to the pin" golf contest, won by Pfc. Anthony DiNova, from Troy, N.Y., of Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 16. DiNova was able to hit a glow-in-the-dark golf ball within 10 feet 3 inches of the pin.

While DiNova and others were busy hitting golf balls, a few other service members trying to win sky diving tickets were doing it in much cooler way in the "Freeze Your Assets" contest.

During the contest contenders

were tasked with standing or lying on blocks of ice until the last man was left standing.

"I've been on here too long to give up. I know I just have to not think about (it) and win," said a chilly Lance Cpl. James Fowler, Charlotte, N.C., native of Marine Aircraft Group 16, somewhere around the hour and a half mark.

Since the determination of the competitors was too much to bear, the SMP decided to call off the contest at 2 hours and 20 minutes and award the remaining four frozen service members with prizes.

For the final contest of the evening, Marines and Sailors chosen from the laser tag event participated in the SMP "Fear Factor."

After grotesque contests such as capturing live gold fish with the challengers' mouths, and dissecting a fetal pig by hand, only two men remained in the competition: Lance Cpls. Carson Clover, Ashland, Ore., native of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 161, and Chris Holder, Omaha, Neb., native of Marine Wing Support Squadron 373.

For the final "Fear Factor" competition, Clover and Holder had to rip the eyeballs out of a lamb's skull and eat two raw Rocky Mountain Oysters. Although Clover was



Lance Cpl. Chris Holder of Marine Wing Support Squadron 373, rips out the eyes of a lamb's skull during the Single Marine Program 'Fear Factor' finals of the SMP New Years party.

ahead in the competition, the oysters were just too much to handle. As he vomited the digested remains of the Rocky Mountain Oysters, Holder took the lead in the race.

"The texture of the (Rocky Mountain Oysters) was awful," said Clover. "I just couldn't stand it. The outside was all rubbery and the inside was too mushy."

In a true mind-over-matter victory, Holder shared the secrets to his success, "I just kept reminding my counterpart what these things actually are, and I kept mentioning it until he finally threw up."

For more information on events such as the SMP New Year's Party, call 577-6171, or stop by the Great Escape in building 5509.



Service members hold and sit on ice blocks during the 'Freeze Your Assests' competition, attempting to win two sky diving tickets.



Service members race to see who can catch a live gold fish with their mouth. The first who caught a fish advanced in the SMP 'Fear Factor.'



Vehicles caught in the no parking zone

Deploying service members scramble for limited vehicle storage space

Story by Lance Cpl. John Sayas

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Limited storage space here for vehicles and recreational items such as mobile homes, boats and motorcycles has left many deploying Marines looking for storage elsewhere or in some cases leaving their vehicles parked illegally.

Nancy Dussault, Outdoor Adventure Center manager, Marine Corps Community Services, said there has been very limited storage space at their two vehicle storage lots over the last several months because of plans to move 90 spaces from the vehicle storage lot across from the Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum to another storage lot scheduled to open next month at Camp Elliott.

"We are in the process of moving 90 spaces by the museum because of future plans for expanding the museum," Dussault said. "Feb. 2 should be when we officially start moving those vehicles from the lot by the museum to Camp Elliott."

The vehicle storage lots located on base are available for active duty and reserve service members and retirees. There are 550 storage spaces available for a fee in various sizes ranging from 20 feet to 40 feet in length, according to Dussault. Service members looking for storage are put on a waiting list and contacted once a space is available.

"We are approximately 90 percent full," she said. "We have put our waiting list on hold until we can get these folks moved over into the other lots."

She said they haven't been able to provide service members storage as fast as they would like to because of the reduction of spaces available, however, they have been able to cut the waiting list in half over the last six months.

"We maintain an active waiting list which means we are constantly looking at the list to make sure we can fill the spaces we have available for everybody," Dussault said.

Dussault said every effort is made to provide storage for anyone who needs a space, with priority going to service members deploying.

"I do whatever I can to give them service," she commented. "Our main focus is to get everyone served and do what we can to make people happy."

Once a space is available, the individual is contacted and required to fill out a contract, said Dussault. They must provide a name or power of attorney for anyone who will



There are two vehicle storage lots available to active duty, reserve and retired service members for a small fee. The lots are the only authorized spaces on station for storage of vehicles. Photo by Lance Cpl. John Sayas

take care of their belongings while they are deployed. Members must also have a base decal and current license and registration on their vehicles.

"We do advise them if they are going to be away for six months to contact their insurance company to let them know that the vehicle is going to be non-operational," she explained. "That way it cuts them a break in their insurance. They don't have to pay as much."

There is relief in sight though as there are plans to build a new permanent vehicle storage lot with added spaces scheduled to be built starting this spring, according to Jim Democko, Morale, Welfare and Recreation support officer.

"After an extensive search for a site, it was decided to build the permanent lot directly east of the horse boarding stables," he said. "The new storage lot will have 792 spaces and construction is expected to begin sometime this spring and be open in the summer."

In the meantime, there have been many cases of Marines leaving their vehicles illegally parked for long periods of time, especially during deployments, because of the limited spaces available, according to Staff Sgt. David Sudan, traffic chief, Accident Investigation Division, Pro-

vost Marshal's Office. He said any vehicle left unattended for more than 72 hours is considered abandoned and may be towed at the owner's expense, as stated in Station Order 5510.2B.

"Illegally parked vehicles have been a problem because of a lack of space at the lots," Suder said.

Suder said once a vehicle has been cited for a parking violation, every effort is made to locate and inform the owner that their vehicle is illegally parked before any further action is taken. They are not always successful though because some vehicles are not properly registered, making it difficult to identify and locate the owner.

He suggested that service members should make every effort to locate storage either on base or at facility out in town to avoid towing of their vehicle and the costly fees that go along with it.

"We try and help out as much as possible," he said. "Towing a vehicle is our last resort after we've exhausted all other means to contact the individual."

For more information on vehicle storage, call the Outdoor Activities Center at 577-4150 or stop by the office in building 6673. The center is open seven days a week except holidays.

New class to assist in healthier lifestyles

Story by Cpl. Jeff Zaccaro

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

A new weight loss class that starts aboard the Air Station Jan. 27th will leave its students with the knowledge to live a healthier lifestyle.

Choose to Lose will focus on educating its students on the general rules of proper nutrition in order to develop an individualized diet, unlike traditional programs with one-size-fits-all meal plans.

According to Julie Carlson, Marine Corps Community Services health promotions educator and exercise physiologist, the class is not a diet class, but has been created in response to the growing number of inquiries about how to live a healthier life.

"A lot of people read diet books that are just money makers. Choose to Lose is not one of these kinds of diets. It is a lifestyle. It is something that people should follow for the rest of their lives," said Carlson.

Carlson, who holds a masters' degree in exercise physiology and was once a cardiac rehabilitation specialist, knows the importance of eating small healthy meals – one of the tenets of a healthy lifestyle.

"We will be focusing on eating five to six small meals a day and incorporating lots

of fruits and vegetables," she said. "We will also discuss how to stay away from no nutrition foods such as white bread and bagels."

To do this, the class will follow guidelines set forth by the American College of Sports Medicine, the American Heart Association and the Five-a-Day campaign.

During the free, four-week class that meets every Tuesday for one hour at the Semper Fit Center conference room, students will also learn what other exercises and workout programs will maximize the benefit of their new healthy lifestyle.

Since the class is voluntary, Carlson stressed the importance of having strong will power when participating.

"Students need to be serious about changing their body, losing weight or living healthier and must be willing to learn," Carlson said. "The class is very technical, so if you aren't really into it you are going to be bored to tears."

Because of the amount of information covered in the class, students may sometimes be assigned homework, such as meal logs, according to Carlson.

Although the Choose to Lose program is only four sessions, Carlson's office offers a variety of other fitness courses and

classes to aid in keeping off the pounds and improving personal health.

"In addition to Choose to Lose, Semper Fit Health Promotion Office offers tobacco cessation courses, aerobic classes, group exercises and more," she said.

To enroll in the class or for more information, call Julie Carlson at 577-7963.

OPSEC

...it could save a life

FARP Marines prepare to support

Story and photos by
Sgt. Nathan K. LaForte

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION YUMA, Ariz. – Forward Arming and Refueling Points exist to extend the already long arm of Marine Corps aviators.

The sites are portable “mini air stations” that set up wherever and whenever pilots need to refuel or rearm.

FARP Marines from throughout the United States are participating in Exercise Desert Talon, a two-week exercise designed to train Marines who are going to Iraq later this year. The Marines are brushing up on the skills required to set up these sites while learning a few new tricks as well.

Aviators flying aircraft ranging from AV-8B Harriers to most Marine Corps helicopters can refuel at FARPs, said 1st Lt. Scott M. Clendaniel, FARP team commander, Marine Wing Support Squadron 374.

“The squadron will say they need a FARP at a certain grid coordinate,” the Fairfax, Va., native said. “We’ll plan a convoy and set up a site. We’re prepared to go wherever they need us.”

Usually, the sites are set up so aircraft can land, rearm, refuel, and get back into the action as soon as possible, Clendaniel explained.

To accomplish this mission a FARP needs Marines from a variety of Military Occupational Specialties, especially since the site has to not only sustain itself, but also the aircraft it supports, he added.

Motor transport Marines bring the FARP Marines and equipment to the predetermined location.

Military policemen are used as a security force for the other Marines during the convoy to and from the site, and as the site is in operation.

Cpl. Shane Proulx, aircraft recovery specialist, MWSS-374, says his job is the groundwork for the FARP once the Marines arrive at the site.

“We work at setting up the airstrip,” he explained. “We lay the matting, set up the lights, and assist the aircraft with landings and takeoffs. We are the guys that oversee the repairs of the runway while it is in operation.”

Proulx added that the recovery specialists also have capabilities to perform a

high power turn up, or diagnostic check, on Harriers when they come in for fuel.

After the airstrip is set up, bulk fuel specialists and ordnance technicians go to work replenishing the aircraft while they are on the ground.

When all this is taking place, a group of Marines stand by carefully watching the whole operation and ensuring its safety.

“We are there in case there is an aircraft mishap,” said Cpl. Joseph J. Deangelo, aircraft firefighting and rescue specialist, MWSS-374. “We are trained to save the pilots and the aircraft.”

Once all of these sections are set up, the FARP Marines are capable of operating the FARP 24 hours-a-day, Clendaniel said. “The pilots just need to let us know when they’re coming in.”

Creating these sites is a big task to train for because there are “people from different areas coming together and they have to work as a team,” noted the 25-year old.

The Marines not only have to work together, but they also have to learn from each other because of the impending deployment to Iraq, revealed Proulx.

“Every Marine needs to know how to do everyone else’s job,” he said. “In case one (Marine) goes down, we can still do the job.”

Clendaniel explained the Marines “won’t know exactly how to do each job” from their time here, but the familiarization they will get with each other will pay off in the long run.

“Marines are great amateurs,” he said. “They can watch someone doing something and can just jump in and help get that job done.”

On top of getting to know each other and their roles in the FARP, the Marines are receiving some additional training that will help them while in Iraq, said Capt. Greg Poland, armor instructor, Ground Combat Department, Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron 1.

“We are teaching them the basic techniques to get a convoy from point ‘A’ to point ‘B,’” he stated.

This training package includes convoy operations, reactions to snipers while in a convoy, vehicle recovery, Iraqi customs, and crew-served weapons handling and tactics.

To give these classes, MAWTS-1



Lance Cpl. John A. Salas, yells down the fuel level inside the tank while Lance Cpl. Mike Richardson keeps an eye on the gauges during a fuel transfer at Exercise Desert Talon 1-04. Both Marines are bulk fuel specialists with Forward Arming and Refueling Point Team 2, Marine Wing Support Squadron 374.

brought in a group of infantry Marines from 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division from Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command, Twentynine Palms, Calif.

All of the Marine instructors here will use their own experiences in Iraq to help train the Marines for what they could encounter while doing their jobs in Iraq, said Sgt. Anthony Riddle, one of the instructors.

“We’ll give them guidance and good

training, but it’s harder to teach them because of the different mindset,” he said. “They’re trying to win the hearts and minds (of the Iraqi’s).”

According to Proulx, who spent time in Afghanistan last year, the Marines are in good hands with the instructors.

“They are doing an awesome job here,” he said. “When the Marines get (to Iraq) they’ll start relying on the training, and input what they learn here into what they do there.”



Above: Two CH-46E Sea Knight helicopters wait with spinning rotors, while MWSS-374 FARP Team 2 fills their tanks during Exercise Desert Talon at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz.

Left: Lance Cpl. Mike Richardson and Lance Cpl. John A. Salas, bulk fuel specialists, MWSS-374 FARP Team 2, monitor the fuel pressure during a fuel transfer from a fuel truck to a CH-46E Sea Knight helicopter.



Staff Sgt. Roberto Vasquez, bulk fuel staff noncommissioned officer-in-charge, MWSS-374 FARP Team 2, holds a fuel transfer hose steady while Lance Cpl. Mike Richardson, bulk fuel specialist, MWSS-374 FARP Team 2, locks the hose into a fuel tank. FARPs are portable 'mini air stations' that set up wherever pilots need to refuel or rearm.



A crewmember from a CH-46E Sea Knight helicopter watches the progress as his crew chief fills up their helicopter with fuel. The helicopter was refueled after performing aerial operations during Exercise Desert Talon 1-04.

Military Working Dogs receive new body armor

Story by Cpl. Isaac D. Pacheco

MCLB Albany Combat Correspondent

MARINE CORPS LOGISTICS BASE ALBANY, Ga. – Military working dog handlers here and throughout the Marine Corps have a new tool in their arsenal in the fight against crime.

The manager of the Marine Corps Working Dogs Program recently issued new body armor to K-9 units Corpwide.

The K-9 department here is testing the unique body armor, which has been specifically designed to protect their four-legged counterparts.

The new K-9 operations vests are made of woven Kevlar fiber, soft body armor panels.

With these thin body armor panels, the vest weighs only seven pounds and is strong enough to protect dogs against small arms fire and stab wounds.

The vests are manufactured to the same standards as human body armor, and are durable enough to take multiple hits to the same area.

The extra level of protection offered by the new body armor is particularly a necessity for the Marine Corps' military working dogs due to their need to train in an expeditionary nature.

"The new armor is versatile enough for deployments that involve searches, tracking and extractions," explained Cpl. Daniel Hillery, military working dog handler here.

"Any day, on the base or in a deployed status, we could encounter a situation where the dog is being targeted. If we see someone as a hazard and we're going to release the dog on them, we'll know that the dog will be safe because he's protected," he further explained.

The vests have several features that give K-9 units previously inaccessible flexibility.



Military Working Dog Aldo reacts to a simulated assailant during a training session with his new K-9 operations vest. The new body armor is designed to protect the dogs against small arms and stab wounds. Photo by Cpl. Isaac D. Pacheco

"Removable cold packs inside the vests help keep the military working dogs cool in extreme climates such as in the Middle East," Hillery explained.

"There are also rappel loops sewn into the vest. If we want, we can climb with a dog and even rappel. There's also a harness on the vest that allows us to parachute with the dog if we need to," he pointed out.

However, there are some drawbacks associated with the large K-9 vests. These include added weight and loss of mobility.

"It limits the dog's movements in some ways, and can make it harder for them to jump," Hillery said.

"It's extra weight on them, and at first it's a little awkward. It's kind of like the first time any Marine puts on a flak jacket and Kevlar. They're learning to work with it," he continued.

At \$1,000 each, the new vests are a significant investment for the Marine Corps.

Proponents of the new armor argue that the price of the vest is negligible compared to the cost of training and caring for a new working dog.

"We get attached to the dogs because they're our partners, and we don't want to lose them," Hillery said.

"If you estimate the cost of raising, feeding and training a dog, it adds up to some-

where around \$60,000. Replacing a dog ends up being a lot more expensive and time consuming," Hillery went on to explain.

Along with the financial benefits, the new K-9 body armor is giving the Marines behind the dogs more confidence to accomplish their missions no matter what task is assigned to the unit.

"I think that it makes us feel more confident with the dogs because we know that they're going to be protected, and we feel like we can do more with them," Hillery explained.

"In any situation we encounter, I'll feel more secure knowing that the dog I rely on to get the job done is safer," he said.

GTEP final phase begins

Story by 1st Lt. Kate S. VandenBossche

Marine Forces Europe Public Affairs Officer

KRTSANISI, Georgia – In the span of 100 days, more than 200 hundred Georgian soldiers from the Georgia Train and Equip Tank and Mechanized Company will learn everything from basic infantry skills to advanced mechanized infantry and tank tactics.

"The training you are about to undergo will be extremely demanding and will challenge soldiers at every level," said Maj. Keane, the GTEP Phase IIIIE commanding officer, during the opening ceremony held Jan. 2, at the Krtsanisi 9/11 Training Area.

Interim President Nino Burjanadze and Lt. Gen. David Tevzadze, the Georgian Minister of Defense, thanked the Georgian soldiers for their devotion to their country and noted that GTEP has helped the Georgian military gain attention from international governments and agencies. They also thanked the U.S. military, specifically the GTEP training staff for actively strengthening the bond between the two nations. Other distinguished guests in attendance at the opening ceremony included U.S. Ambassador Richard Miles, Deputy Commander, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Europe, Maj. Gen. Jack Davis and the head of the Georgian Orthodox Church Archbishop Ilia II.

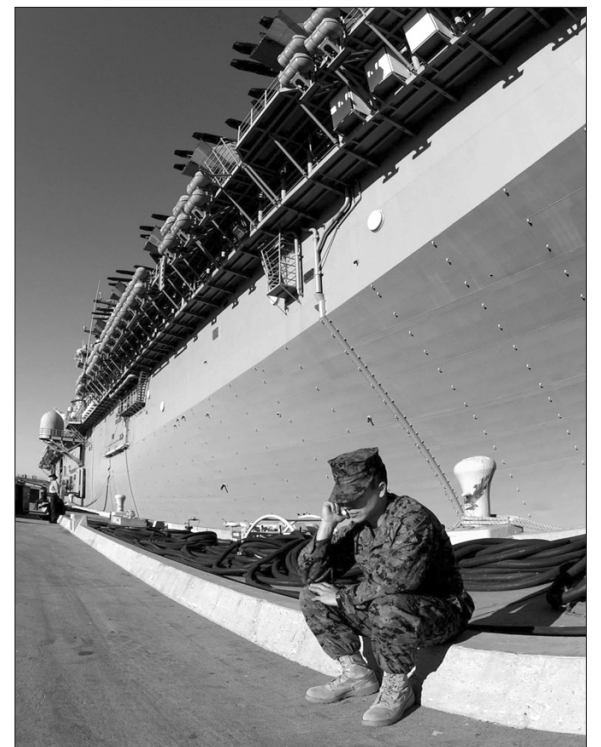
Before the Georgians stood proudly before their families and government officials, they conducted their initial fitness test, based on Army standards, and physicals to ensure they were capable of handling the rigors of the training program.

"I promise you that we will be at your side from now until you stand proudly before your country at graduation," said Keane. "We will give you 100 percent of ourselves and ask only that you give the same in return."

During the 14-week training cycle, the mechanized infantry company, tank company, engineers, 120mm mortarmen and headquarters company will spend their first four weeks learning marksmanship, land navigation, landmine awareness and basic first aid. Georgian soldiers will spend the latter half of the training evolution learning the fundamental skills and tactics required of their individual jobs. The program also includes conditioning hikes and Marine Corps martial arts training incorporated throughout the 100 training days.

The culmination of this training cycle will be a combined arms company live fire exercise with T-72 tanks, BMPs with dismounted infantry and 120mm mortars that will test the knowledge and skills of every soldier.

"The unit as well as each individual will feel great pride in personal accomplishment and confidence in their warrior skills," said Keane.



Bon voyage

Lance Cpl. Mario Reyes, of Chicago, says a final goodbye to his family on his cellular phone prior to boarding the amphibious assault ship *USS Boxer* (LHD-4), Jan. 14. The Boxer departed on a deployment to the Central Command area of responsibility in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II force rotation. Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Mark J. Rebilas

Safety - a habit you can live with!

Miramar bowler places in All-Services top 10, All-Marine Team destroys opponents

Story by Sgt. J.L. Zimmer III

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

In a three day tournament that would decide which branch of the Armed Forces would be crowned bowling champions, one member of the All-Marine Team rose above the rest to lead his team to victory.

Gunnery Sgt. James M. Hall, Marine Tactical Air Control Squadron 38 maintenance management chief, was the highest scoring bowler on the winning team.

Hall has been bowling for more than 25 years and credits that to his success.

"After the first day of qualifications at the championships, I was the highest single qualifier for all the branches," said the 38-year-old Bay Minette, Ala. native. "But by the end of the day I had injured my shoulder and had to really deal with the pain."

Technical Sgt. Ricky Beck, Ellsworth Air Force Base,

S.D., said they were surprised that the Marine team won the tournament.

"(The Marines) do not get half as much time on the lanes as we do because our jobs are so different," he said in an interview with the United States Army Community and Family Support Center.

Hall and his teammates have played together in league games in the past and used this cohesion to help them win the tournament.

Gunnery Sgt. Robert Fleck has bowled with Hall for four years on the All-Marine Team and hopes to continue to do so.

"He is a very consistent bowler," Fleck, a 28-year veteran of the sport said. "National average for men is about 175-180 and he has over a 200 average."

Now that this years tournament has ended, Hall has started preparing for next year.

"Every year the team would try to start picking up our

game about one month away from the trials," he said. "I will bowl at least three hours a week, not including league games. This equals about 50 games for me."

Although Hall has had an interest in bowling since an early age, his true love for the sport did not flourish until he started playing for the Corps.

"As a child bowling was only a hobby," he said. "But when I joined the Marine Corps and started playing for them it became a competitive sport."

"I guess I am just a natural athlete," he continued. "I just picked up golfing about three years ago and my handicap is already a 13."

The team's final score was 9,199 points, with Hall contributing 1,617 to his team's victory. With this score the All-Marine team defeated the Air Force by three points with the Army trailing behind by 95. For more information go to <http://www.dod.mil/armedforcessports> and click in the bowling icon.

Miramar Surf Team tryouts not just for the pros

Story by Cpl. Kristen L. Tull

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION MIRAMAR, Calif. – The Miramar Surf Team is holding tryouts at Churches Surf Spot on Camp Pendleton, Saturday Feb. 7, beginning at 9 a.m. The team captain, James Carter, says everyone that surfs, male or female, no matter what his or her ability can come out.

"Anybody on active duty or reserve at Miramar that surfs needs to give it a shot," said Carter.

Carter finds out a lot of people miss out because of a fear of competition.

"I don't really go by ability. I make sure that they handle themselves well out in the water," said Carter. "We accept all abilities. The more people surf with someone better than them, the better they will get. There's a handful of guys on our team that are really good, but it's all about having fun and getting Miramar together."

Carter says the only requirement is that participants have their own board and wetsuit, after that, the benefits are endless.

"Once they become part of the team, they get team pricing on everything," said Carter.

Competitions are held locally as well as nationally.

"We do this so that the team gets a chance to compete against each other, giving them more confidence, and hopefully a trophy."

The Miramar Surf Team falls under Marine Corps Community Services, therefore most of the entry fees for the competitions are covered. Team members only have to provide transportation.

"A big event for 2004 is the contest at Point Mugu, where not only is the entry fee paid," said Carter. "There are just so many benefits."

Carter also says base teams like to com-

pete against each other.

"Recently (Marine Corps Base Camp) Pendleton has really taken off, as far as participation and support. Miramar used to be on top, so, hopefully this try-out will bring a lot of new people to replace the ones we have lost due to a change in duty station or military status," said Carter.

Military family members are also welcome to come. Though family members can't be on the team, they can join the Hawaii Military Surfing Ohana Southern California. HMSO is a non-profit organization dedicated to all military personnel on active duty, reserve, retired, prior military and family members who reside in California or abroad. They promote and maintain the surfing lifestyle and aloha spirit.

"Last year, we held a summer surf camp at Miramar, and we have a lot of kids that got boards for Christmas (and were) ready to go," said Carter.

According to Carter, even if you aren't on the team, you can still compete in the competitions.

"There were other Miramar guys at our last contest that showed up and surfed well," said Carter.

Last year, the tryout advertisement said that participants were required to swim a certain distance, which even Carter said he couldn't do.

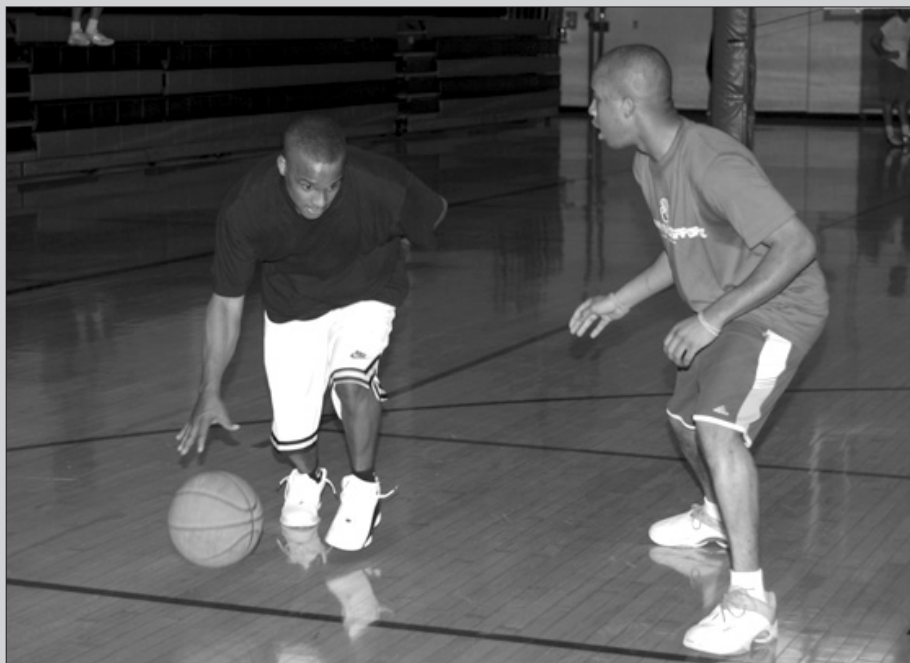
"I made sure that wasn't on there this year. I wouldn't want to scare any one away," said Carter. "I'm really not going to be turning people away."

Try outs normally last a couple of hours, and participants will know right away if they've made the team.

For more information please contact Semper Fit Sports at 577-1202.

'We accept all abilities. The more people surf with someone better than them, the better they will get.'

James Carter



Hoop it up

Marines practice in the newly remodeled basketball courts in the Miramar Sports Complex in preparation for the Intramural Basketball League that will begin Jan. 29 aboard the Air Station. Advanced registration is required, and registration forms can be obtained from the gym. For more information on the league, call 577-4808. *Photo by Cpl. Jeff Zaccaro*



**Buckle up now,
tomorrow may be
too late.**

Chapel weekly schedule of events

Holy Family Catholic Community

- ♦ Mass: 11 a.m. Sunday, 11:30 a.m. weekdays.
- ♦ Rosary: 10:30 a.m. Sunday.
- ♦ Confession: 10:15 a.m. Sunday or for appointments call Father Berchmanz at 577-1333.
- ♦ Religious classes for children for first communion, confirmation: 9:30-10:45 a.m. Sunday.
- ♦ Youth gathering and planning following mass Sunday.
- ♦ Baptism: Normally the first Sunday of the month. Call chaplain's office for details.
- ♦ Marriage: Call chaplain for details at least six months before wedding.
- ♦ Instruction in the Catholic faith (RCIA). Call chaplain's office for details.
- ♦ Scripture Class: 7 p.m. Wednesday in Chapel classroom.
- ♦ Choir Practice: 6 p.m. Wednesday in Main Chapel.

Liturgical Christian

- ♦ Sunday: Choir rehearsal at 9 a.m.
Liturgical worship at 9:30 a.m.
Adult/Youth/Children Bible study at 10:45 a.m.
- ♦ Tuesday: Morning prayer group (Room 4) at 6 a.m.
Contemporary Gospel Service at 7:30 p.m.
- ♦ Wednesday: Crafts and conversation at 9 a.m. Free childcare provided.
Women's bible study at 10: 45 a.m.
Baptist service at 7 p.m.
- ♦ Thursday: Liturgical choir rehearsal at 7:30 p.m.
- ♦ Friday: Baptist bible study at 7 p.m.

Jewish

- ♦ First Friday of the month at MCRD San Diego at 7 p.m.
- ♦ Last Friday of the month in Edson Range Chapel Camp Pendleton at 7:30 p.m.

Free warfare symposium

The U.S. Naval Institute and Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association will host the largest state-of-the-art warfare and technology exposition and symposium on the West Coast at the San Diego Convention Center Feb. 3-5.

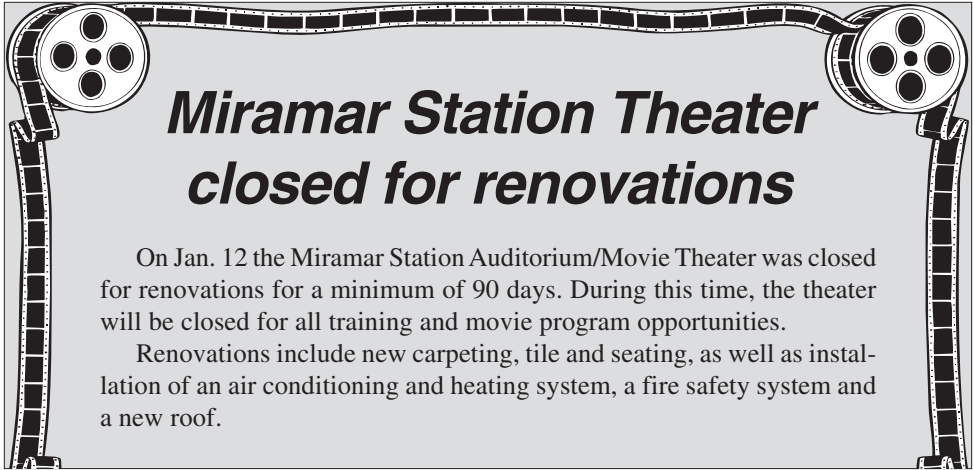
The event will feature discussions by leading military experts and exhibits from more than 350 technology leaders.

It offers a rare opportunity for Marines and Sailors to enhance their professional

knowledge and to hear discussions on current National Defense issues by senior leadership in a panel format including discussions on the use of Marine Corps Expeditionary Strike Groups and lessons learned from Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. The theme of this year's exhibition is "Born Joint?"

The kickoff address, panel discussions and entrance to the exhibit hall are free of charge. There is a charge to eat at meal events, but visitors may listen without eating free of charge.

For registration and complete program schedule please visit www.west2004.org.



Miramar Station Theater closed for renovations

On Jan. 12 the Miramar Station Auditorium/Movie Theater was closed for renovations for a minimum of 90 days. During this time, the theater will be closed for all training and movie program opportunities.

Renovations include new carpeting, tile and seating, as well as installation of an air conditioning and heating system, a fire safety system and a new roof.

Bingo at the E-Club Soccer League

Every Monday and Wednesday evening and Saturday afternoon, the main room at the E-Club becomes an All Hands Bingo Parlor.

The doors will open at 5 p.m. for the 7 p.m. start. Saturday games start at 1:30 p.m. An early bird game starts 30 minutes before the main game. With a possible top jackpot of \$25,000, bingo offers a fun-filled afternoon or evening!

The Pizza Pizzazz menu is available, as well as full beverage service.

The Enlisted Club is in Bldg. 5509, with the Staff NCO Club, The Great Escape and Pizza Pizzazz.

Everyone 18 and over is invited to play (except Bingo employees and their immediate families). Call 689-1460 or visit www.mccsmiramar.com for details.

Semper Fit Center has reopened

The Center was closed for upgrades to make your workouts more comfortable.

For information about hours and schedules please visit www.mccsmiramar.com/semper%20fit/semperfit.html.

The 6 vs. 6 Soccer League begins Feb. 19. Games will be from 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Tuesdays. For more information visit the sports office or call 577-1202.

All-Marine Woman's Basketball

The All-Marine Trial Camp will be held from March 13 to April 1 here. Marines interested in competing must submit a resume no later than Feb. 21. Resume forms are available on the MCCS Web site at www.usmc-mccs.org/semperfit/sports/sports_main.asp, or may be picked up from the Athletics Office at the Mitchel Sports Complex, building 2471.

For more information on Semper Fit events visit www.mccsmiramar.com.

Friday Night Old School, R&B

Join us as your favorite DJs spin the hottest jams all night long at the Enlisted Club. Authorized patrons and sponsored guests only! For more information call 693-1543.



Fun in the hot desert sun for 13th MEU, ESG-1 Marines, Sailors

CENTRAL COMMAND AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY – Marines and Sailors from the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit and Expeditionary Strike Group 1 take a day off from live fire training exercises and enjoy a little bit of rest and relaxation. They held a “Truck Rodeo” to boost morale and let off a

little steam while training in the CENTCOM A.O.R. Some of the events included a Meals, Ready-to-Eat stacking and restacking drill, a timed mortar carry and set up drill, stretcher bearer drills, seven-ton truck tire racing, trailer pull, chain sack carry and the bull in the ring strong man competition.

The training is being conducted by Marines and Sailors supporting Expeditionary Strike Group 1. ESG-1 is an example of the Navy and Marine Corps’ commitment to the Secretary of Defense’s vision to transform the U.S. Armed Forces for the 21st Century. ESGs are designed to enable the United

States to conduct shaping operations in the Global War on Terrorism. ESG-1 is currently deployed to the Commander, U.S. Fifth Fleet Area of Responsibility in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

Photos by Petty Officer 1st Class Ted Banks